

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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NSAE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05
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DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:TSWILKINSON:PG

APPROVED BY P:PCHABIB

NEA:HCOLLUMS

S/S:- MR. SEBASTIAN

-----120036Z 016387 /75-70

O 120019Z PEB 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 032245

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EAID, ECIN, TS, US

SUBJECT: HABIB-HEDDA MEETING OF FEBRUARY 11, 1977

1. IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB,
AMBASSADOR HEDDA RENEWED REQUEST FOR SECURITY SUPPORTING
ASSISTANCE FOR TUNISIA AND GAVE VIEWS ON VARIOUS OPTIONS
FOR EXCHANGES OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS.

2. RECALLING BACKGROUND OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY'S
OCTOBER MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SUBSEQUENT
DISCUSSIONS, HEDDA ASKED THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION CONSIDER
EXTENDING SECURITY SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE TO TUNISIA TO
SET EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS IN REGION OF POTENTIAL REWARDS FOR
CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED TO SENS,
HUMPHREY AND PERCY AND CONG. ZABLOCKI AND FOUND THEM
RECEPTIVE TO IDEA. HEDDA ALSO RENEWED REQUEST FOR
"POLITICAL" MEETING WITH HIGH US REPRESENTATIVE, TO
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PRECEDE AN EARLY MEETING OF JOINT COMMISSION.

3. HABIB ASKED IF SECURITY ASSISTANCE QUESTION WOULD BE
AN ESSENTIAL AGENDA ITEM FOR JOINT COMMISSION; HEDDA SAID
NO, QUESTION COULD BEST BE DECIDED INDEPENDENTLY. HABIB
ASKED IF NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING IN TUNIS COULD BE

CHAired FOR US BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN SECRETARY VANCE IN

VIEW OF LATTER'S CROWDED TRAVEL SCHEDULE IN NEXT FEW MONTHS. HEDDA SAID IT WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE FOR THE SECRETARY TO ATTEND JOINT COMMISSION, PERHAPS AT SOME POINT DURING HIS MARCH MOSCOW TRIP, BUT HE WAS SURE GOT WOULD BE PLEASED IF HABIB HIMSELF WERE TO LEAD US DELEGATION IN PLACE OF SECRETARY. HE REITERATED GOT APPRECIATION FOR POLITICAL/MILITARY SUPPORT THAT HABIB HAD HELPED TO ORGANIZE DURING DIFFICULT DAYS IN AUGUST, 1976.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE HIGH-LEVEL TUNISIAN VISIT TO THE US, HABIB SAID WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK INTO QUESTION OF VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, SINCE HEALTH APPEARS TO PRECLUDE VISIT BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THERE IS AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR HIGH-LEVEL VISITS. HEDDA RECOGNIZED THIS DIFFICULTY, BUT ASKED THAT US GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO ITS BEST FRIENDS. NOUIRA WOULD NOT WANT TO MAKE A STATE VISIT, JUST A BRIEF WORKING VISIT WITHOUT FANFARE WHICH WOULD TAKE VERY LITTLE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S TIME.

5. HABIB SAID WE SHOULD PLAN FIRMLY FOR A JOINT COMMISSION MEETING, AND THAT HE WOULD EXPLORE QUESTIONS RAISED BY HEDDA WITH SECRETARY VANCE DURING TRIP NEXT WEEK, AS WELL AS WITH AMBASSADOR MULCAHY AT SCHEDULED AMMAN MEETING. IN CONCLUSION, HE BRIEFED HEDDA ON PURELY EXPLORATORY NATURE OF THE SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP.

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